

mony is not ill-founded. Extremes are said to meet, a truism illustrated by the fate of the subject before us, in which we see the confidence in the results of nice chemical research shaken alike by the prejudice of ignorance, and the power of a progressive philosophy. At one period scientific men trusted solely to the alliaceous odour; at another, to that and the tombac alloy; at another, to these and certain liquid tests. All these have been shown, by more careful research, to be liable to misconception, and an *experimentum crucis* substituted, supposed to be susceptible of no misapplication. That falls to the ground under the crushing wheels of an advancing science, leaving us, where common sense should have long since placed us, in an attitude of observation of the whole ground of each particular case, blindly confiding in no single proof, however strong, and yet reaching a justifiable and salutary decision upon the concurrent evidence afforded by a multitude of particulars, whose accidental coincidence would amount to a miracle.

ART. X. *Observations on the Use of the Hydrocyanic or Prussic Acid in Pertussis or Hooping-Cough.* By EDWIN P. ATLEE, M. D. of Philadelphia.

THE memoir of Dr. MAGENDIE, of Paris, presented to the Academy of Sciences of that city, November, 1817, on the uses of prussic acid in certain diseases, afterwards translated and published in the Journal of the Royal Institution of London, gave origin to numerous experiments, in different parts of Europe, in phthisis pulmonalis, irritable coughs, and nervous diseases. It was not, however, until the appearance of his second memoir,* published at Paris, 1819, containing additional researches, physiological and clinical, upon the employment of this powerful agent, that the profession in Europe and America were induced to place much reliance upon its curative influence.

About the time these researches were being made in Europe, the writer of these "observations" was a student of medicine in the University of Pennsylvania, and as additional facts were presented to the professional world through the journals here and abroad, he determined to apply the acid in cases of hooping-cough when a suitable opportunity presented. Statements, however, shortly appeared, giving accounts of so many fatal results from its administration under the

* "*Recherches Physiologiques et Cliniques sur l'Emploi de l'Acide Prussique ou Hydrocyanique,*" &c.

superintendence of judicious practitioners, that some of his elder and experienced brethren of this city deprecated its use altogether. Thus circumstanced, having just entered upon practice, although his own judgment did not forbid its use under proper regulations, he dared not to make an essay.

In the year, 1824, however, he had an opportunity of gratifying his wishes in the case of his own child, who, at about eleven months old, was attacked with hooping-cough.

Dr. GRANVILLE, of England, has reported favourably of the effects of the acid in this disease upon his own children—and believing his report, and feeling myself authorized to administer whatever my judgment indicated to be right to my own child, I gave her the following formula, viz. R. Acid. hydrocyanic, gtt. iv.; syrup. simplic. $\mathfrak{z}\text{ij}$. M. A tea-spoonful morning and evening. The second day she took the same quantity three times during the day, and so continued for one week, when she was entirely well. Except a dose of calomel and rhubarb, given previous to the taking of the syrup, she took nothing else.

The decided success in this case induced me to proceed in my experiments. From that time to the present, (3d month, 26th, 1832,) I have prescribed the acid, as hereafter specified, to children, from the age of six months to that of ten, fifteen, and twenty years, and to several adults, amounting in all to more than two hundred cases. The disease being radically removed in from four to ten days, or at furthest a fortnight.

During the recent prevalence of epidemic influenza, I found that when accompanied by hooping-cough, the acid was not efficacious in removing the cough, and evidently increased the catarrhal uneasiness. It was therefore not persisted in.

From the numerous cases in which I have prescribed the acid in hooping-cough, and an attentive observation of its powers in this appalling disease, when unattended by any other, I confidently recommend it to the medical profession. In no instance has it proved deleterious to my patients, but rather seems to have destroyed a previous predisposition to croup and catarrh.

The following is the course pursued. During the first, or what may be termed the inflammatory stage of the disease, I resort to the general depletory agents, if called on at all. Usually, however, parents seldom apply for medical advice until the second, or spasmodic stage, or that in which the *hoop* is clearly discerned. If, on inquiry, the bowels have not been freely evacuated, a full dose of calomel and rhubarb, according to the age and condition of the patient, is prescribed. If, to use the common phrase, “the child is much stopped

up with phlegm," emesis is produced by antimonial wine, which, when judiciously prepared, I prefer to any other emetic. After this, the syrup is given as follows:—

For a child six months old, one drop of the acid to one ounce of simple syrup. A tea-spoonful twice a day. If no uneasiness, dizziness, or sickness is produced within forty-eight hours, the same quantity is given three times a day. From six months to a year, the same may be given four times a day.

From 1 to 2 years of age, Hydrocyanic acid, gtt. ij. syrup, $\mathfrak{z}\text{j}$.

2	3	do.	do.	iiij.	do.
3	6	do.	do.	iv.	do.
6	12	do.	do.	v.	do.
12	15	do.	do.	vj.	do.
15	20	do.	do.	vij.	do.
20	30	do.	do.	viiij. to x.	do.

A small or large tea-spoonful being the dose in each case, repeated as often as close observation of its effects will warrant. I have never yet given it more than four times a day.

Having tried the imported acid, and found it entitled to little reliance, I have for the last six years prescribed that prepared in this city by our judicious chemists, FARR and KUNZI, according to the formula of Mr. BRANDE. It contains $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of pure prussic acid of GAY LUSSAC, and is therefore not so strong as that recommended by M. MAJENDIE.

Believing that the acid might be efficacious in spasmodic asthma, I requested my young friend, Dr. ISAAC PARRISH, late resident student of the Philadelphia Alms-house, to try it. He accordingly prepared the syrup in the proportion of four drops to the ounce, and gave a tea-spoonful every two hours, with decided benefit. The patient experiencing great relief in a few hours. This case, he states, to have resisted any impression from the other ordinary remedies.

It is not my intention, in the present paper, to notice the statements of several practitioners in different sections of the union, who have, within a few years, administered the acid in hooping-cough, because, so far as I have examined their reports, the cases have been but few in which it was fully tried. A number of my brethren in this city and elsewhere, are, at my request, engaged in experiments with the syrup, in pertussis and other affections, from whom I shall, in due season, receive reports; my object at present is only to call the attention of physicians generally to the subject treated of, with the hope that their experience may furnish as pleasant results as my own.

Philadelphia, 3d month, (March,) 1832.